9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

for an appropriate medicine, and his main function is organizing the observances. 791 793

(*d*) SYMBOLISM

In the field of medicine imagination runs riot, and associations are unpredictable. The ingredients of most medicines are professional secrets and unknown to the user who takes the concoction on trust from his doctor, and inquires no further. Therefore the study of medicine is not linked to the study of social relationships in the same manner as is the study of ritual, for the symbolism of medicines is individual and free, whereas the symbolism of ritual is common and obligatory. 278 789

Nevertheless, the imagination of doctors works within the general symbolic system, and such knowledge as we have indicates that many of the associations made are similar to those used in ritual. In medicine, as in the rituals of kinship, one type of banana stands for a male, another for a female, a banana sucker represents a kinsman, a sprouting shoot conception. Smithing and coition are felt to be alike, and the molten iron that trickles out of a forge is linked with menstrual blood. Hair stands for growth, and a bald pate a devastated field. A ring, or circumambulation, implies a protecting fence. Pythons, crocodiles, leopards, and lions stand for power and majesty, spears and thorns for attack; vomiting and emptiness for innocence, spitting for forgiveness. There is colour symbolism in medicines (though we know little of it save that the *ikipiki* which stands for the blood of the lineage is red, or reddish brown), and auditory symbolism, the rumble of thunder and the groaning of a bellows being identified. Men mime that which they wish to avoid, as well as that which they desire; like things are antagonistic as well as sympathetic. No doubt a laborious study of prescriptions would reveal further general principles of association, as well as the range of individual imagination, but such a task has yet to be undertaken. [831] [326] [825] [827] [822]